

WASHINGTON CONSERVATION LEADERS



Washington State
Conservation
Commission

NRCS Natural Resources
Conservation Service



December 9, 2005

Dear Conservation District Manager and Chair:

Over the past decade we have made great strides in our state to increase the numbers and skills of our conservation district technical employees. We now recognize that there is a need to better document those skills and anticipate training needs and the capability of districts to deliver technical assistance. This includes opening up another source of funding to keep qualified staff, by becoming eligible for non-engineering practice application through Technical Service Provider (TSP) agreements. It will also provide Supervisors with confidence that staff can successfully undertake and complete projects including practice "sign-off" for state cost share programs.

This is a crucial inventory of existing and desired skills we are working on before going to the legislature for financial support for programs. The overall effort is aimed at continuing our statewide development of a qualified, trained, capable, and effective conservation district workforce.

So, will you help us?

The information you send will be utilized in the following manner:

- Demonstrate to key decision makers at the state and federal levels our collective ability to undertake programs utilizing NRCS assistance to document experience, training completed and in-field experience, coupled with criteria from an existing web-based practice certification program;
- Development of a process for District Self Certification of their Technical Employees so WSCC can pay cost-share vouchers signed by district staff;
- Serve as a basis to assist you in generating Professional Development Plans for your technical employees
- Organizing training programs to specifically meet needs of district staff;
- To give districts opportunities for sharing technical assistance and expanding services to clients.

Suggested Procedure:

- The District Manager reviews the survey materials. If questions arise, contact Ray Ledgerwood at ray.ledgerwood@scc.wa.gov or 208.301.4728
- Then works with each technical employee to complete a "Training Needs and Experience Inventory for TSP Eligibility & CD Non-Engineering Practice Certification".
- The completed inventory will identify the non-engineering practices for which the position should be certified to assist with planning, and/or designing, and/or applying.
- The process of completing the inventory will include documentation and recognition of existing and needed capacity, utilizing NRCS assistance to document experience, training completed and in-field experience, coupled with criteria from an existing web-based practice certification program for district "self-certification".
- The District Manager reviews the completed survey with the NRCS Resource Conservationist.
- The District Manager reviews the completed survey with Board of Supervisors.
- The District Manager returns the completed inventory by email to John Larson, WACD Executive Director at wacd-exec@wa.nacdn.net with a copy to Ray Ledgerwood at ray.ledgerwood@scc.wa.gov.

We are hoping to complete this part of this effort by January 31, 2006.

Thank you in advance for your time and energy with this important effort!
Please call or email either John Larson or Ray Ledgerwood with your questions.

Yours in Conservation,



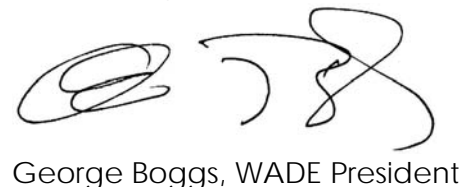
Fred Colvin, WACD President



Mark Clark, WSCC Executive Director



Gus Hughbanks, NRCS State Conservationist



George Boggs, WADE President